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Time-saving Tips for Quick Meals

- Keep dried onion, celery and parsley on hand to put in soups and casseroles.
- Cook extra bacon and freeze it for later use. Or, buy cooked bacon (or pieces) and store in refrigerator or freezer.
- To quickly cook chicken—use microwave to thaw chicken breasts just enough so that you can cut into strips or cubes. Finish cooking in non-stick pan on the stove top.
- Buy chopped garlic in a jar and store in refrigerator (one teaspoon equals one clove).
- Buy chopped frozen green pepper and frozen onion.
- Line the broiler pan with aluminum foil before cooking for easier cleaning.
- To form patties for burgers—shape ground meat into a log and partially freeze; cut the meat into slices of preferred thickness.
- Put meat intended for stir fry in freezer for 45 minutes to 1 hour to make slicing easier.
- Use two sets of measuring cups and spoons so you can measure consecutive ingredients without repeated washing.
- Use kitchen shears to “chop” canned tomatoes in the can.
- Use potato flakes for mashed potatoes.
- Use a pastry blender to slice hard-cooked eggs or mash avocados.
- Use a pizza cutter to slice dough or to cube bread for croutons.
- To make cracker crumbs—place crackers in a heavy-duty zip-top bag and roll with a rolling pin.
- Bake meatballs in a foil-lined pan (instead of “frying”).
- For meat and poultry marinades—use lemon juice, flavored vinegars or fruit juice mixed with herbs.
- Chilling homemade soup causes the fat to rise to the top and harden so it is easy to remove.
- If you need only 1/2 onion, save the root half; it will last longer.
- Keep cottage cheese fresh longer by refrigerating the carton upside down.
- Ice cream stays fresh longer if you press wax paper against the surface and reseal the carton.
- Keep brown sugar soft by storing in refrigerator in a plastic bag.
- Potatoes wrapped in foil before baking traps moisture and steams the potatoes.
- Keep uncooked potato slices from discoloring by soaking in water to which lemon juice has been added.

Visit these Web sites for more ideas:

ISU Extension Nutrition
www.extension.iastate.edu/nutrition

ISU Extension Publications
www.extension.iastate.edu/pubs

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